



**Roxbury Heritage State Park Signature Park Project
Public Planning Workshop #1
Roxbury Community College
March 24, 2014
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Summary of Input



Photo Credit: Pamela Green

The purpose of the meeting was to gather the local public with the purpose of introducing the project and soliciting their input on their vision for the project and on the project goals and priorities. A list of the meeting attendees is attached.

PARTICIPANT INPUT ON VISIONING (YOUR THOUGHTS)

Participants offered the following thoughts on the Roxbury Heritage State Park, including ideas for improvements. We have summarized the most popular responses below.

What are your favorite things about the Roxbury Heritage State Park?

Summary of most popular responses:

- Location (beautiful location and landscape; location on hill)
- House and history (House is still there and oldest house in Roxbury)
- Education of public/history of site / unique/rich history / walking through history
- View of Boston
- Festivals/celebration/ host range of events/ available for community
- Beautiful building/architecture
- Location (in the middle of schools; in walking distance; in my neighborhood)
- (Opportunity to tell) history of African-Americans
- Accessible (in middle of transportation hub)
- Land/open green space

What are your least favorite things about the Roxbury Heritage State Park?

Summary of most popular responses:

- Programs are not consistent/ uninteresting (for local residents)/ not marketed to local community; especially first two rooms are lifeless & purposeless
- Not enough public information/no promotion/marketing
- Gate/fence/entrance/not inviting
- No funding for staff/under-staffed / under-funded for too long
- Constantly closed/short opening hours
- Unknown/ under-utilized/ not inclusive
- Adequate signage is missing / entry points & informational displays missing
- Limited (outdoor) seating

What would your highest priorities be for improving the Roxbury Heritage State Park?

Summary of most popular responses:

- Involve youth and develop youth programming
- Have an operating budget for long-term success and hire qualified staff to greet visitors and provide interpretation and programming
- Programming and accessibility for seniors
- Open the gate
- More cultural, art, and entertainment programs
- Make RHSP a state-wide connection for Roxbury history, culture and education and be more connected to the rest of Roxbury and beyond (e.g. Boston tourism)

What makes the Roxbury Heritage State Park unique?

Summary of most popular responses:

- Views of Boston
- *"It is part of my history"* (including that the park was developed by the advocacy and determination of Roxbury residents, that it was burned down and still survived)
- Location, location, location (proximity to important landmarks and institutions, in a vibrant neighborhood)
- Importance during Revolutionary War
- Connection with past and future (e.g. continuity, living, breathing example of all that Roxbury represents)
- Educational resources and potential to connect to area schools, universities, and colleges

REVIEW AND REFINING OF PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Participants were presented with a set of preliminary goals and objectives that were based on the 1987 Master Plan and input received to date, as well as key questions. The public was asked to provide feedback and additional ideas by writing these on post-it notes and adding them to the large format sheets located on the walls.










Participants were given 5 dots per goal with which to prioritize ideas by goal. They were instructed to use no more than 3 on any one item. The public's priorities within goals are indicated by the number next to the dot.

The responses from the public are documented in the following pages.

This is what we heard

PRELIMINARY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: *HISTORY*

GOAL: CELEBRATE THE RICH AND DIVERSE HISTORY OF ROXBURY		
STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
Tell the story of the Dillaway-Thomas House and site throughout history, including the people of Roxbury throughout time. • Tell the history of Roxbury from the beginning to the present to inform the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to connect children to recent history as well • Close the gap (written directly on paper)* 	<p>6 </p> <p>2 </p>
Develop interactive exhibits at the Dillaway-Thomas House to interpret Roxbury's natural, cultural and social history. • Involve community (including youth) in creating content for the exhibits (6) • Dedicate space for Roxbury "now" for the community to re-invent and continually update itself (4) • Keep exhibits fresh and design them so that they are flexible and self-guided whenever possible (using technology, multi-media, cell apps, etc.) (3) • Provide opportunities for visitors to feel as though they are actually a part of history, they can see themselves in it (e.g. wear costume, take a "selfie" with an historical backdrop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe rotating art exhibits by local artists • Use social media • Ask youth what would make them feel comfortable at Dillaway-Thomas House • 20th century African American History • Concurrent with season 4x year (changing exhibits) • Ongoing exhibits and permanent ones • Have youth help with creation of exhibits • Signage for RHS Park • How do we improve Roxbury the Gateway? 	<p>6 </p> <p>4 </p> <p>4 </p> <p>3 </p>
Develop an archaeological conservation lab at the Dillaway-Thomas House to curate archaeological artifacts. • Engage area youth in a public archaeology program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include local science teachers • Account for historical collections and artifacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ include artists 	<p>3 </p>

*The comment "close the gap" refers to connecting the knowledge of the past history with the recent history.

KEY QUESTIONS ASKED:

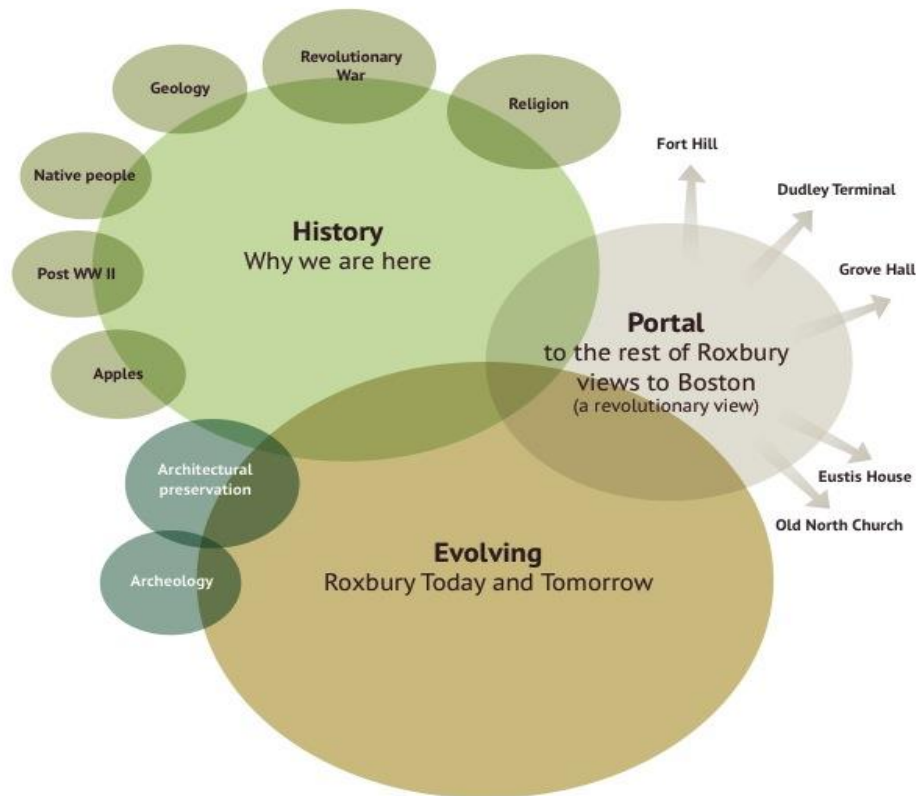
1. Who are the five people throughout history who best represent the Roxbury you want everyone to know?
2. Where does your family like to go when it likes to explore history in Roxbury?
3. What do you think is the most defining event in the history of Roxbury?
A: Urban Renewal / Boston School, Busing, Metco / Southwest Corridor Development

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4. What is your favorite thing about the Dillaway-Thomas House?
5. In your (and your family's) lifetime were there any important historic events in Roxbury that you would like an exhibit to commemorate?
We (I) stopped the highway!!









Comment: Bubble plan addition: (add to arrows at Portal bubble) Garrison House, Malcom X Home, Alvah Kittredge House, Eliot Church, many more



This is what we heard

IMPROVE DILLAWAY-THOMAS HOUSE AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE

GOAL: MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE DILLAWAY-THOMAS HOUSE AND INCREASE ITS USE AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE

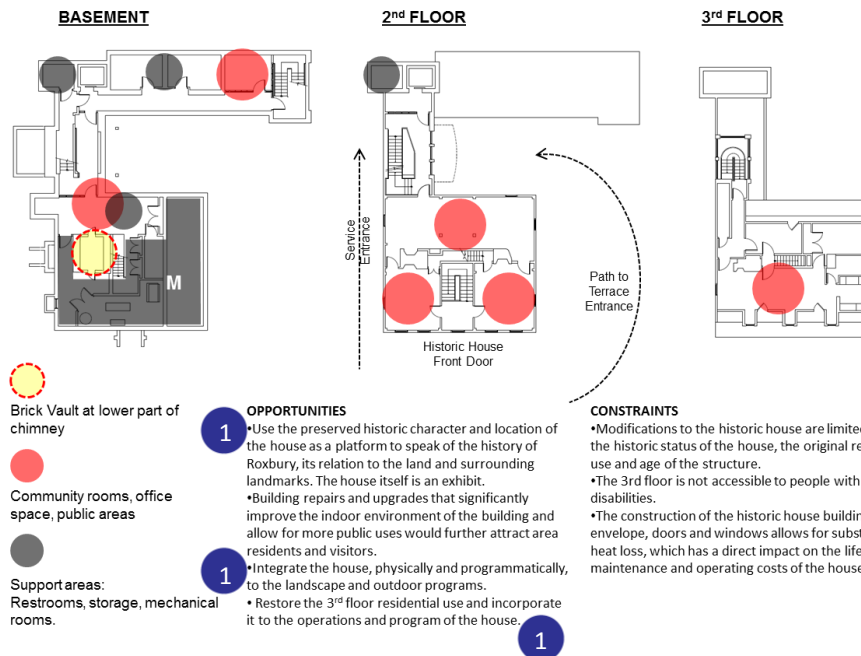
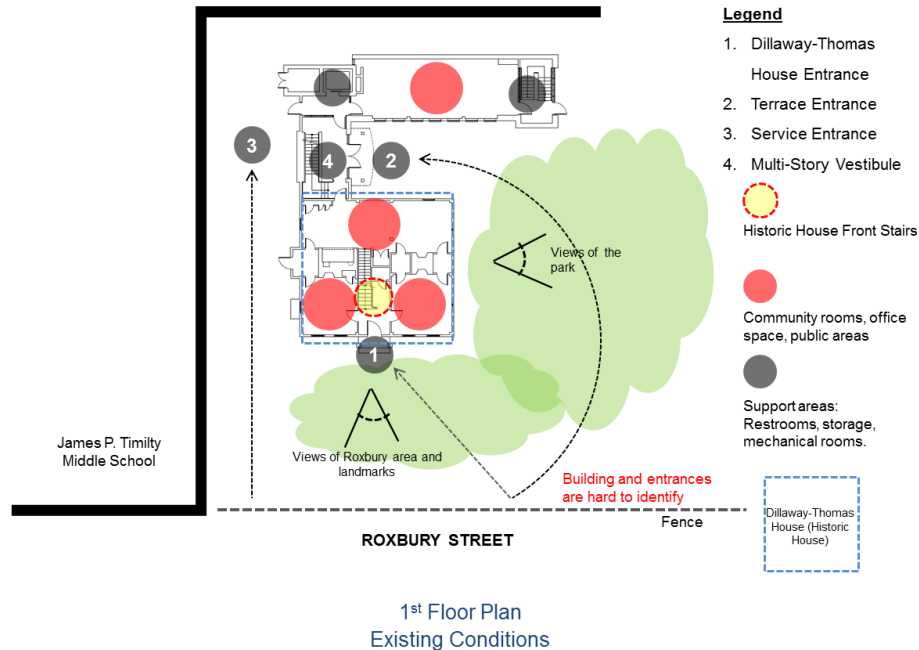
STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
Repair the Dillaway-Thomas House and make improvements to support more and more diverse programming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide bathroom on first floor and/or easier access to existing bathrooms • Provide flexible spaces or multipurpose room(s) • Kitchen for large events • Roof over the patio for holding events in bad weather • Respond to the needs of people with disabilities and the elderly • Incorporate DCR maintenance, storage and services needs into the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add restrooms • Viewing space of the Boston skyline • Green roof to integrate with the landscape • Reading room with Roxbury History Library • Community/Gathering space for friendly dialogue • Roof over the patio in case of bad weather • Accredited Historic Preservation course, working with local colleges • Improve main entrance 	<div>4 </div> <div>5 </div> <div>5 </div>
Support a wide variety of programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using the space for more community events, e.g. farmer's markets, bike fairs, etc. • Allow for use by community groups for events & meetings • Support educational programming (K-college) • Consider an archaeology lab with youth programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal space: hard to accommodate private events • Patio/outdoor multipurpose space: "outdoor room" concept • Youth or senior-focused programs • From a previous visit: enjoyed an exhibit of the work of local artist, including Jamaica Plain • St James/St John churches use the park for picnic, kids to play music... 	<div>7 </div> <div>3 </div> <div>1 </div> <div>2 </div>
Minimize and mitigate disruption to programming during construction period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan for the artifacts during the construction period 		<div>3 </div>

Other comments received were:

- "How representative is Dillaway-Thomas House to other buildings back at the time?"
- "Please do not allow for this renovation to become a stupid mockery."

KEY QUESTIONS ASKED:








1. What changes/improvements do you think should be made to the building?



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INCLUDE COMMUNITY IN ALL PHASES OF PROJECT

GOAL: INCLUDE THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY DURING ALL PHASES OF PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION PROCESS		
STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
<p>Project should be “transformative,” that is, is should enhance and improve the site and the neighborhood overall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be an explicit intention that the improvements are for the benefit of the people who live in Roxbury now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve quality of life by providing opportunities for increased programming, awareness and pride of history and a more beautiful site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate community improvements of community assets need to be timed to prevent gentrification 	<p>2</p> 
<p>Include local residents in the planning, construction, maintenance and other aspects of the project beyond the planning phase: HOW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create jobs for local residents with a commitment to monitor the hiring process); these set asides should exceed city and state-wide benchmarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use local craftsmen & media companies Use the historic draw as an opportunity to attract tourists to Roxbury and encourage spill over investment (e.g. shopping, eating) in the community. Cultivate partnerships to get youth involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide local teens with summer jobs Reach out to youth organizations such as City School or Spontaneous Celebrations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tour guides should be selected by giving priority to Boston residents 	<p>9</p>  <p>1</p>  <p>2</p>  <p>2</p> 
<p>Provide opportunities for meaningful participation and that it is integrated into the process: HOW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage youth in creating exhibits/signage Reach out to residents for their stories/photos Use Patriot's Day as an opportunity to raise awareness and solicit input 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritize new jobs for residents especially youth Local Rox residents should be encouraged to share old photos of Rox, MA Include Roxbury Community College and Boston Public Schools in partnerships 	<p>3</p>  <p>5</p> 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for input throughout the process • Hold public meetings on a consistent schedule and advertise the schedule widely and ahead of time • Give people information • Follow through with actions • Hold meetings at different locations throughout Roxbury • Include questionnaires with advertisement of meetings (then have responses ready for the next meeting) 		<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>
<p>Communicate goals and scope of project well and widely.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the boundaries and scope of the project • Be mindful of potential need to mitigate impacts on neighborhood (e.g. noise, hours of work, traffic) 		

KEY QUESTION ASKED:

1. Who else should we engage and how? Specific suggestions are welcome. List so far includes:

- Youth
- Area organizations and associations
- Civic and community groups
- Non-profit partners
- Cultural groups
- Mass Housing Safety Task Force
- Tenant Associations
- Resident Services
- Community Development Corporations
- Boston Neighborhood Network
- Roxbury Cultural Network

RESTORE & INTERPRET HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

GOAL: RESTORE AND INTERPRET THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE AT THE DILLAWAY-THOMAS HOUSE TO PROMOTE PUBLIC USE AND AWARENESS

STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
<p>Increase awareness regarding archaeological, agricultural, and historical significance. Incorporate architectural structures/monuments from historical building in Roxbury that have been or will be demolished.</p> <p>Showcase the three types of historical Roxbury fruit/apple trees on the site.</p> <p>Incorporate signage/interpretation for all significant parts of the property (granite block, pudding stone, fruit trees, etc.)</p> <p>Create an adaptive landscape that can be used as a site for temporary modern sculpture site.</p> <p>Consider replanting native flowers/plantings.</p> <p>Involve local schools in gardening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically use Roxbury puddingstone (1) as wall material and (2) as at least one sculpture Include edible gardens Provide living wage jobs for local youth Institute sustainable, regenerative land use practices Keep the apple trees Specifically use Roxbury granite as the material for the welcome desk/visitor's center gift shop Improve signage on the grounds, on Roxbury Street and on Malcom X Blvd. Invite John D. O'Bryant Madison Technical High School and RCC for long term gardening and creative learning projects Increase size of orchard; partner with non-profit food groups to maintain and embellish Engage youth in entrepreneurship training Introduce more native-to-Roxbury plants to the landscape 	<p>5 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p> <p>3 ●</p>
<p>Visually and emotionally connect the property to the surrounding neighborhood and to downtown Boston. Remove invasive vegetation</p> <p>Showcase puddingstone cliff along Malcolm X Street</p> <p>Create a park-like environment within the landscape</p> <p>Include way-finding sign(s) directing visitors to other parts of Roxbury that relate to the RHSP (e.g. museums, recreational facilities, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No kiddie park in this spot – it should be a place for peace and contemplation Place signage in further out locations (such as on I-93) to attract visitors from afar Emphasize/celebrate Gay Street 	<p>1 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p> <p>2 ●</p>

Develop a palette of materials to be used throughout the RHSP		
<p>Improve and expand park amenities to make the landscape more inviting. Consider alternatives to the fence/gate</p> <p>Develop/improve a community garden on site</p> <p>Create a walking trail around the property</p> <p>Create a stronger, more welcoming sense of arrival</p> <p>Provide opportunities for children's dynamic play, through changing site features, in the landscape</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and improve the community garden using local gardening groups, high school, and college students • Consider adding a spray feature, constructed with puddingstone • The view of Boston needs to be featured • Parking lot is very important • Existing playground is not safe and is rarely used – visitors seeking a play space should go to Jeep Jones Park (down the street) • An addition to the archives is needed 	<p>1 ●</p>
<p>Provide support for additional programming. Provide more resources for area schools Cooperate with Roxbury Community College</p> <p>Improve amphitheater, patio area Replace/upgrade the electrical box at the amphitheater Raise the base of the amphitheater Install a removable cover/shade for the amphitheater</p> <p>Need staff to support programming</p> <p>Explore seasonal programming possibilities</p> <p>Explore food as a theme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a partnership with RCC • Build a deck off the side of the building • Add \$\$\$ to the operating budget for the RIGHT staff • Add permanent staffing to support programs and the house • Need for permanent full-time staff to support programming, curatorial and exhibits • Future staffing is important • Need program staff • Jobs for students are needed in the form of welcome staff, events coordinator(s), marketing coordinator(s), etc. • The amphitheater is not a good space – seating does not work – lights and restroom facilities are needed in the vicinity 	<p>3 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p> <p>11 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p>
Ensure that contractors are supervised and educated so that the landscape is developed in a historically accurate manner.		
<p>Retain public access for a variety of programming and events Currently the site is a popular spot for wedding photos; continue to allow such access</p> <p>Will need to obtain additional funding to keep the gates open more frequently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public access for space rentals is very important 	<p>2 ●</p> <p>1 ●</p>

KEY QUESTION ASKED:

What other types of activities/uses would draw visitors to this landscape?



Roxbury Heritage State Park Project Today: Existing Constraints

- Fence & locked gate are not welcoming
- Lack of clear signage results in a lack of information regarding what the RHSP is/can be used for
- Views of the Boston skyline are partially obstructed by overgrown vegetation
- Easement divides the space
- Space limitations constrain possibilities regarding exhibits and programming



Comments/Priorization:

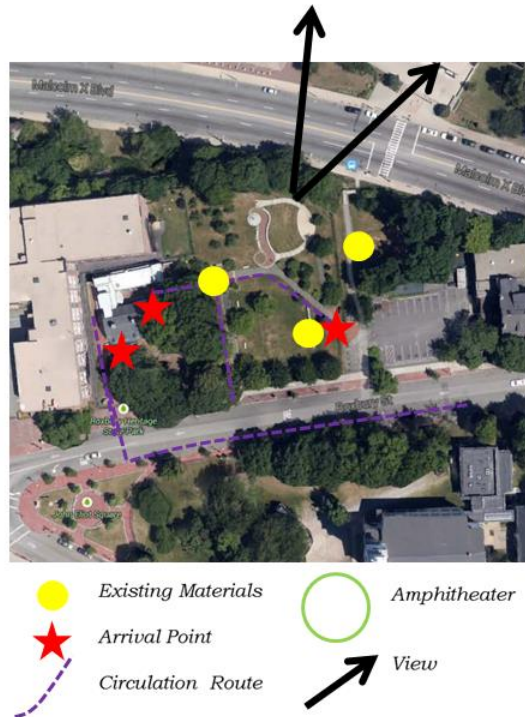
- (2) Lack of clear signage
- (1) Views of Boston skyline
- (1) Space limitations



Roxbury Heritage State Park Project

Future Opportunities

- Opportunities for learning and education
- Opportunities for fun!
- Create a more welcoming sense of arrival
- Provide an improved venue for performances/gatherings
- Open views to Boston from the park
- Improve circulation throughout



- Create more of a community resource
- Direct visitors to other related historic sites in Roxbury
- Create a changing sense of discovery for visitors (especially children)
- Create a historical narrative through details and amenities
- Provide opportunities to learn about various parts of Roxbury history in a variety of ways, including self-guided exhibits.







Comments/Prioritization:

- (3) Opportunities for fun
- (2) Improved performance venue
- (1) Community resource
- (1) Direct to other historic sites
- (1) Changing sense of discovery
- (2) Historical narrative
- (3) Opportunities to learn about Roxbury history

This is what we heard







LONG-TERM ASPIRATIONS

ENHANCE A STRONG POSITIVE IMAGE FOR ROXBURY, AMPLIFY NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE AND REINFORCE COMMUNITY CHARACTER

STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
<p>Raise profile and improve access to the Roxbury Heritage State Park. Promote opportunities to bring more people to visit the park, with a particular emphasis on the residents of Roxbury</p> <p>Increase awareness regarding the existence of the RSHP and the possibilities it offers, especially to the 40 years old and under crowd.</p> <p>Provide, promote and encourage intergenerational activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire additional staff and scholar in residence so all this great work means something • Staff and volunteer for outreach marketing to neighborhood organizations and neighbors • Encourage local tours. Student lead tours by local high school and college students • Promote/develop an ambassador corps composed of residents of all ages. 	<p>3 </p> <p>2 </p> <p>5 </p>
<p>Ensure local residents have access to the Park Use transparent and user-friendly permitting process that accommodates manageable schedule</p> <p>Build in a clear message that this is for the current residents of Roxbury</p>		<p>1 </p>
<p>Make decisions within the spirit of the original master plan and be mindful of the goal of connecting Roxbury's historic sites Work with City of Boston to care for and promote Roxbury's historic sites. Graphic connection to other sites Promote the fact that tours of Roxbury originate here</p> <p>Use this project to promote Roxbury as a whole</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have more tours of the building so the community can be more engaged • Develop projects to draw citizens of all ages to contribute, support and enjoy park • Use the park as a venue to educate community for homeownership • Park should become a connection of entrepreneurs with the local economy • No displacement after development. Roxbury people need to stay • Center for education beyond school education: adult education, after school activities, cultural programs, music classes for children, etc. 	<p>5 </p> <p>2 </p>

STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Jazz dying? • Our children need connection with music and culture 	

FOSTER A CULTURE OF STEWARDSHIP

STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO DATE	COMMENTS/IDEAS	PRIORITIES
Develop an appropriate model for HOW to oversee the long-term operation of the Roxbury Heritage State Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCR – community partnership 		1 
Identify WHO would be involved in a stewardship plan for the long-term sustainability of the park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to former Advisory Board • Friends Group? • Reach out to the National Parks Service to explore possibilities for some sort of a partnership • Create a framework for a public-private partnership and include neighborhood organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You do not need to be part of a group to be involved 	2  1  3  1 
Obtain funding for future operational costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the City and community in developing partnerships to support artistic, cultural and festive elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural programs • Music Classes for children 	6 
Create a sense of local recognition and ownership of the Park; HOW?		